LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (previously presented)   An interactive system for enhancing the searchability of data, the system comprising:

a categorization system that associates search terms defining categories or attributes with items to be found;

a communication system for communicating with the categorization system and with a store of information from which information is to be selected based on the search terms; and

a cooperative facility associated with the categorization system that enables users, including listers and searchers, to interactively and at least partially automatically, modify or supplement the search terms initially assigned to the items to be found by the categorization system, wherein the categorization system, communication system and cooperative facility are structured to store the modified or supplemented search terms.

2. (original)   The interactive system of claim 1, in which the store of information is accessible via the Internet.

3. (original)   The interactive system of claim 1, in which the categorization system enables assigning search terms that are hierarchical and enables assigning search terms that are based on items to be found.

4. (original)   The interactive system of claim 1, in which the cooperative facility is accessible to the users and the users comprise listers of information and/or end searchers which search for the information.

5. (original)   The interactive system of claim 1, in which the search terms comprise categories of items to be found that are arranged hierarchically and attributes of items defined descriptively and the categorization and attribute information is stored in a categorization and

attribute database.

6. (original)   The interactive system of claim 1, including a facility that dynamically enables a lister of items in the store of information to use existing categorization and attribute data and to add additional categories via the cooperative facility.

7. (previously presented)   The interactive system of claim 1, including a facility that dynamically enables at least one searcher of items in the store of information to use existing categorization and attribute data and to add additional attributes via the cooperative facility.

8. (original)   The interactive system of claim 7, including a facility that is operable in conjunction with the cooperative facility to limit the number of attributes displayed to users upon their initial viewing of available attributes.

9. (original)   The interactive system of claim 8, in which the number of displayed attributes is less than 30.

10. (original)   The interactive system of claim 8, in which the displayed attributes are selected based on the greatest number of items under a current category.

11. (original)   The interactive system of claim 8, in which the displayed attributes are selected based on prior searchers' activities.

12. (original)   The interactive system of claim 8, wherein displayed attributes are selected based on a current searcher's search history.

13. (original)   The interactive system of claim 8, in which displayed attributes are ordered based on aggregate use of attribute search terms by prior searchers.

14. (original) The interactive system of claim 1, including a facility that groups together those attributes that are related to one another.

15. (original) The interactive system of claim 1, including a facility that enable searchers to specify attribute selections by entry of a plurality of terms connected by Boolean expressions.

16. (original) The interactive system of claim 1, wherein the cooperative facility includes a secondary facility that imposes limitations on types of attributes permitted to be added to the database holding the attributes.

17. (original) The interactive system of claim 1, in which the cooperative facility includes a subsidiary facility that removes redundancies in categorization and attribute search terms.

18. (original) The interactive system of claim 1, wherein the cooperative facility includes an intelligent restructuring of categories and attributes facility that iteratively reviews the categorization and attribute data to maintain hierarchies that maximize the degree of convergence achieved by a selection at each category level.

19. (original) The interactive system of claim 2, in which the categorization system enables assigning search terms that are hierarchical and enables assigning search terms that are based on item attributes.

20. (original) The interactive system of claim 2, in which the cooperative facility is accessible to the users and the users comprise listers of information and/or end searchers which search for the information.

21. (original) The interactive system of claim 2, in which the search terms comprise categories of items to be found that are arranged hierarchically and attributes of items defined descriptively and the categorization and attribute information is stored in a categorization and attribute database.

22. (original) The interactive system of claim 2, including a facility that dynamically enables a lister of items in the store of information to use existing categorization and attribute data and to add additional categories via the cooperative facility.

23. (original) The interactive system of claim 2, including a facility that dynamically enables a searcher of items in the store of information to use existing categorization and attribute data and to add additional attributes via the cooperative facility.

24. (original) The interactive system of claim 2, including a facility that groups together those attributes that are related to one another.

25. (original) The interactive system of claim 2, including a facility that enable searchers to specify attribute selections by entry of a plurality of terms connected by Boolean expressions.

26. (original) The interactive system of claim 2, wherein the cooperative facility includes a secondary facility that imposes limitations on types of attributes permitted to be added to the database holding the attributes.

27. (original) The interactive system of claim 2, in which the cooperative facility includes a subsidiary facility that removes redundancies in categorization and attribute search terms.

28. (original) The interactive system of claim 2, wherein the cooperative facility includes an intelligent restructuring of categories and attributes facility that iteratively reviews

the categorization and attribute data to maintain hierarchies that maximize the degree of convergence achieved by a selection at each category level.

29. (original)   The interactive system of claim 1, in combination with an automatic clustering facility that minimizes the need of a search engine user to successively refine search terms in a manual fashion, by monitoring which particular result-items a user has historically chosen to visit.

30. (previously presented)   A method for searching for data items in a data store, the method comprising the steps of:

operating a computer-based communication system that effects communications between a plurality of data searchers and the data store containing the data items;

operating a search engine that enables the data searchers to enter initial key words describing data items to be found;

receiving selected data items that are responsive to the initial key words in a given order of items, organized into successive viewable pages;

initiating a manual review of the received selected data items; and

operating an automatic clustering tool that is responsive to the items manually perused by the data searcher, including items not reviewed by the data searcher, the automatic clustering tool responding to action by users, including listers and searchers, by interactively creating and storing categorization criteria by which at least a portion of the received selected data items are reordered or filtered for being viewed by the data searcher, and/or by which a further search is performed and results are based thereon.

31. (original)   The method of claim 30, in which the automatic clustering tool responds to a searcher's data item perusal activity in a prior session.

32. (original)   The method of claim 30, in which the automatic clustering tool constantly revises the categorization criteria in response to continuous reviewing of the selected data items by the data searcher.

33. (original) The method of claim 30, in which the automatic clustering tool is responsive to a given data searcher's reviewing activity over a period of time.

34. (original) The method of claim 30, in which the automatic clustering tool eliminates selected data items from being viewed by the data searcher, based on the successively created categorization criteria.

35. (original) The method of claim 30, including creating search context for a search session and saving search context from a prior search session to a subsequent search session.